What is claimed is:

1. A method of encoding a characteristic of a biological sample, the method comprising:

identifying a collection of more than one codes of a standard coding scheme, different codes corresponding to different concepts of the standard coding scheme;

forming a pre-coordinated code from a concatenation of the more than one codes, the pre-coordinated code not being found in the standard coding scheme; and

storing the pre-coordinated code along with other pre-coordinated codes.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising storing a collection of one or more lexical terms describing a concept associated with the pre-coordinated code.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the codes comprise SNOMED (Systemized Nomenclature of Human and Veterinary Medicine) codes.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein concatenating the codes comprises concatenating the codes in accordance with at least one syntax rule.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the at least one syntax rule comprises a rule specifying an ordering of terms according to their SNOMED axis.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing the stored pre-coordinated codes for assignment to a sample.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the sample comprises an excess tissue sample received from a donor institution.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein providing the stored pre-coordinated codes for assignment comprises displaying at least one selection menu including lexical terms of concepts associated with the pre-coordinated codes.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein providing the stored pre-coordinated codes for assignment comprises providing the stored codes as elements of a set of user interface instructions transmitted over a network.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the user interface instructions comprise markup language instructions.

11. The method of claim 6, further comprising
receiving a query identifying a pre-coordinated code; and
identifying a collection of at least one sample having been assigned the pre-coordinated code.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein receiving the query comprises receiving the query via computer network.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein receiving the query comprises receiving the query encoded within a network transfer protocol message.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein forming the pre-coordinated code from a concatenation of the more than one codes comprises concatenation of the more than one codes with code separating delimiters.

15.   The method of claim 1, wherein the pre-coordinated code corresponds to a diagnosis concept.

16.   The method of claim 1, wherein the pre-coordinated code corresponds to at least one of the following: a tissue concept and a procedure concept.

17.   The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the collection of codes comprises a code not in the standard coding scheme.

18.   A computer program product, disposed on a computer readable medium, for encoding a characteristic of a biological sample, the computer program including instructions for causing a processor to:

identify a collection of more than one codes of a standard coding scheme, different codes corresponding to different concepts of the standard coding scheme;

form a pre-coordinated code from a concatenation of the more than one codes, the pre-coordinated code not being found in the standard coding scheme; and

store the pre-coordinated code along with other pre-coordinated codes.

19.   The computer program of claim 18, further comprising instructions for causing the processor to store a collection of one or more lexical terms describing a concept associated with the pre-coordinated code.

20. The computer program of claim 18, wherein the codes comprise SNOMED (Systemized Nomenclature of Human and Veterinary Medicine) codes.

21. The computer program of claim 18, wherein the instructions that concatenate the codes comprise instructions that concatenate the codes in accordance with at least one syntax rule.

22. The computer program of claim 21, wherein the at least one syntax rule comprises a rule specifying an ordering of terms according to their SNOMED axis.

23. The computer program of claim 18, further comprising instructions for causing the processor to provide the stored pre-coordinated codes for assignment to a sample.

24. The computer program of claim 23, wherein the instructions that provide the stored pre-coordinated codes for assignment comprise instructions for displaying at least one selection menu including lexical terms of concepts associated with the pre-coordinated codes.

25. The computer program of claim 23, wherein the instructions that provide the stored pre-coordinated codes for assignment comprise instructions that provide the stored codes as elements of a set of user interface instructions transmitted over a network.

26. The computer program of claim 25, wherein the user interface instructions comprise markup language instructions.

27. The computer program of claim 18, further comprising instructions for causing the processor to:

receive a query identifying a pre-coordinated code; and

identify a collection of at least one sample having been assigned the pre-coordinated code.

28. The computer program of claim 27, wherein the instructions that receive the query comprise instructions that receive the query via computer network.

29. The computer program of claim 18, wherein the instructions that form the pre-coordinated code from a concatenation of the more than one codes comprise instructions that concatenate more than one codes with code separating delimiters.

30. The computer program of claim 18, wherein one of the collection of codes comprises a code not in the standard coding scheme.